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# SCIENCE.

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FRIDAY, MAY 3, 1895.

## CONTENTS:

<i>National Academy of Sciences. Report of the Watson Trustees on the Award of the Watson Medal to Seth C. Chandler:</i> S. NEWCOMB, B. A. GOULD, A. HALL.....	477
<i>Summary of Conclusions of a Report by Drs. D. H. Bergey, S. Weir Mitchell and J. S. Billings upon 'The Composition of Expired Air and its Effects upon Animal Life'</i> .....	481
<i>American Metrological Society:</i> J. K. R.....	484
<i>The International Mathematical Congress:</i> GEORGE BRUCE HALSTED .....	486
<i>Current Notes on Physiography (V.):</i> W. M. DAVIS.....	487
<i>Current Notes on Anthropology (VII.):</i> D. G. BRINTON .....	488
<i>James D. Dana</i> .....	489
<i>Correspondence:—</i> .....	490
<i>The Distribution of Sledges, etc.:</i> OTIS T. MASON.	
<i>Scientific Literature:—</i> .....	490
<i>Geikie's Life of Ramsay:</i> JOSEPH LE CONTE.	
<i>McMurrich's Invertebrate Morphology:</i> A. S. PACKARD.	
<i>Vertebrate Zoölogy:</i> C. H. M. SPALDING's Botany: W. P. WILSON.	
<i>Notes and News:—</i> .....	497
<i>Fossil Vertebrates of Argentina; Variation in Crabs; Regression and Organic Stability; General.</i>	
<i>Societies and Academies:—</i> .....	501
<i>American Geographic Society; The Biological Society of Washington; The Academy of Science of St. Louis.</i>	
<i>Scientific Journals:—</i> .....	503
<i>The Botanical Gazette; The American Naturalist.</i>	
<i>New Books</i> .....	504

## NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES.

### REPORT OF THE WATSON TRUSTEES ON THE AWARD OF THE WATSON MEDAL TO SETH C. CHANDLER.

ON the recommendation of the Board of Trustees of the Watson Fund, the Academy last year unanimously awarded the Watson medal to Seth C. Chandler, of Cambridge, Mass., for his investigations relative to variable stars, his discovery of the period of variation of terrestrial latitudes, and his researches on the laws of that variation. It is the pleasant duty of the Trustees to set forth the grounds on which this award was recommended.

It is a result of the well-known laws of dynamics relating to the rotation of a rigid body, as the earth is assumed to be, upon its axis, that the poles of the earth may be determined in two ways. Our globe, being a spheroid flattened at the poles and protuberant at the equator, has a certain axis passing between the points of greatest flattening. This axis has no direct connection with the rotation of the earth; it would exist if the latter, retaining its present form, did not rotate at all. It is called the axis of figure, being determined altogether by the shape of the earth.

But the earth has also an axis around which it rotates. Now, assuming the earth to be a rigid solid, there is no necessity that the axis of rotation should correspond to that of the axis of figure just described.

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